

OUR WESTERN CONVENTION TOUR AT WASHINGTON CITY

OUR first stop was Washington City. Several of the Baltimore friends joined our train as we passed through their city, while others preceded us on an earlier train – in all about twenty. We had a very enjoyable time and were very cordially greeted, not only by the Washington City friends, but by representatives from Alexandria, Annapolis, and various surrounding cities and towns. Our discourse was from the text, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We endeavored to point out the importance of reverence to the Lord as an element of Christian character. We showed that it was necessary that we should reverence before we had a desire to come to the Lord, and that it is still necessary to us after we become acquainted with him. This reverence necessarily increased as our knowledge of God increased – as we accepted his gift of justification, through faith in the precious blood. Our reverence increased with every step of our progress, with every increase of our knowledge of our Heavenly Father's character. Thus reverence with each of us should have been in proportion to our progress in grace, until finally, overwhelmed with an appreciation of God's goodness to us, we were ready to hear with appreciation and to obey the Apostle's exhortation, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and your reasonable service." – Rom. 12:1.

We endeavored to point out that every failure on our part after reaching consecration and Divine acceptance and begetting of the Holy Spirit would be because of a loss of reverence or of a failure to continue to grow therein. We intimated, for instance, that neglect of Bible study and prayer implies a loss of reverence, or a deficiency of reverence. Likewise a failure to heed the Divine Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, or a neglect to

assemble ourselves as Divinely exhorted would mean a lack of reverence for the Divine wisdom which gave the exhortation. We admitted that carelessness on the part of the Church in respect to the election of its servants, whereby sometimes unsuitable brethren were chosen to be the Lord's mouthpieces, was the result of a lack of reverence for the Lord, for had he been properly revered his instruction on the subject would have been more particularly sought and more carefully followed. We endeavored to show also that the various deflections from the Gospel message might be safely attributed to an insufficiency of reverence for the Lord's Word, which allowed self-seeking ambition to draw aside from the narrow way of humility and service and self-sacrifice. In a word, practically every difficulty with which God's people have to contend is the result of an insufficiency of reverence.

On the other hand, those who by nature have the mental qualities of reverence large have a difficulty in an opposite direction, namely, they are disposed to reverence persons and things unduly. Some reverence antiquities and, applying this along religious lines, they reverence too highly old religious systems. Some reverence wisdom and human ability and are in danger of "worshiping the creature more than the Creator," because the creature is visible and near, while the Creator is unseen except by the eye of faith.

Thus we reached the conclusion that the naturally irreverent have much to study and develop in respect to reverence for God and his mighty works and his brethren and everything that is good. Reverence for the Lord can neither begin too soon nor ever be too great. It should discern Divine wisdom and providences in all of our affairs, present and future. Reverence guides to the narrow way and keeps us therein and encourages us step by step to make our calling and election sure – to the glory, honor and immortality, which God hath in reservation for those that love him.

The dear friends bade us a hearty adieu, giving many expressions of their love, and of their interest in the Convention tour, and in all the dear friends whom we would meet en route and who they hoped would be greatly blessed, comforted and cheered. A good night's rest at the home of Brother and Sister Pyle prepared us for our journey to Piedmont, Ala. A number gathered at the depot to bid us adieu and one Colporteur, having concluded to take advantage of the Piedmont Convention, accompanied us on the same train. [R4455 : page 249]

PIEDMONT, ALABAMA

At Atlanta, Ga., several friends joined us en route for Piedmont. We had a delightful season of refreshment and fellowship and arrived in due course at Piedmont. The Convention had already been opened. Considerable rain had fallen, but the friends reported that there had been no dampening of their ardor; that the Convention already had been a most delightful season of Christian fellowship and that some of the testimonies given had been amongst the richest they had ever heard. Our stay was for the day only, but the Convention continued four days. Brothers Wright, Senor and Stevens with others serving spiritual refreshment.

About two hundred, gathered from various parts of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee, were in attendance. Our address to the friends of the Truth was an exhortation to a proper appreciation of the Divine guidance of the harvest work, in its every particular. We pointed out that those who cannot recognize anything special in the harvest work and the harvest message were distinctly at a disadvantage and would not be likely to hold out to the end. On the other hand those are specially blessed whose faith enables them to realize that we are now in the harvest time and that the harvest message which we have received into good and honest hearts is the Divinely appointed "meat in due season" intended for

our strengthening. Our realization of the Lord's supervision of his own work helps to keep us humble in mind and in conduct. It also helps to keep us trustful, and looking to the Lord, and waiting on him for direction in respect to the future. It hinders us from feeling that a great amount of responsibility rests upon us. It thus deters us from rushing in where angels fear to tread. Instead of feeling like Uzzah of old, that we must steady the Ark or otherwise everything would go wrong, we may have fullest confidence in God and his still greater interest in his work, and his wisdom as to how it should be conducted and his omnipotent power in making all things work together for the accomplishment of his own good purposes. Twenty-four symbolized their consecration by water baptism.

The session for the public crowded the auditorium beyond its capacity. Piedmont is a small city, about two thousand population, including children. We must have had nearly all of the adult population, therefore, in our attendance of about seven hundred. We were glad of the assurances of the friends of the Truth that they had been refreshed and encouraged, and hoped that some impression was made upon the public also.

As we boarded the evening train for Memphis a large crowd of the dear friends, gathered at the station, sang, "God be with you till we meet again."

THE MEMPHIS CONVENTION

We had a grand time at Memphis. Here we were met by Dr. Jones and party in two Tourist Sleeping Cars, the party numbering about fifty. One of the sleepers had a kitchen served by a proficient culinary chef. We joined the party, a reservation having been already made.

To this Convention came friends of the Truth from a considerable area. It was certainly a very enjoyable Convention and one long to be remembered. Our stay was for only one day.

Brother Rutherford remained, with others, to serve the spiritual food on the following day. Our addresses here were along the same line as at Piedmont and here also there was a good turnout of the public, to the number of about five hundred. The dear friends were extremely cordial in welcoming us. A general dinner for all was served at noon and a luncheon in the evening. The chicken roasts must have suffered a considerable depletion in providing the bountiful repast. Everything that could be thought of was done for our comfort, and we trust and believe that correspondingly the dear Memphis friends received from the Lord a rich blessing upon their own hearts. [R4456 : page 249]

Our farewells brought tears to many eyes, and many requests to be remembered at the Throne of Grace, and assurances that we were remembered, yea, many times a day, in their petitions. Our night's journey brought us to New Orleans on Sunday morning.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

A prayer and testimony meeting of the friends in the local Church had preceded our arrival, and many of the friends were at the depot and gave us a very warm reception. They apologized for the heat of the weather, reminding us, however, that they with us had experienced a more intense heat at the St. Paul convention. We assured them that to have received a cool reception would have been a disappointment to us anyway.

Our discourse to the interested, many of you already have read in the public prints, although certain matter of special interest to the local congregation was added. The evening topic, for the public, was, "Where are the Dead?" We had a fine, cool auditorium and the attendance was excellent, the season of the year and the aristocratic character of the city being considered. About six hundred were present. Our topic received the closest attention and, we trust, proved timely and helpful to some. In any event we

committed the results to the Lord with prayer that the effort might be blessed to the good of those who were fully his in that city.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

A night's ride brought us to Houston, Texas, our next stopping place. Our party numbered about fifty, and we were met by a Houston delegation of about the same number, who stood in line and greeted us with hearty handshakes and expressions of welcome as our party passed in review before them the full length of the station room and out into the street. Soon we were at the auditorium, where still others awaited and greeted us. A praise, prayer and testimony meeting proved very refreshing to us spiritually until one o'clock, when all were invited by the Houston friends to a generous dinner, a sumptuous repast indeed, most bountifully provided and most entertainingly served.

At 3 p.m. we addressed the household of faith, particularly seeking to make clear "the mystery hidden from past ages and dispensations, but now made known unto the saints," namely, the fellowship of the Church, the "members of the Body of Christ," the "Bride class" in the sufferings, the sacrifices and the death of Christ the world's Redeemer; – the world's great Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator and Judge. We sought to prove that only by sharing in our Lord's sufferings have we any hope of sharing in his glorious reign of blessing for the uplifting of the world.

Our evening topic for the public was the "Thief in Paradise, the Rich Man in Hell and Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." We had an excellent attendance, very attentive, numbering about six hundred. At the conclusion of the service, there were indications that some had been deeply impressed with certain features of the Divine Plan. The friends had the magazine edition of "Scripture Studies," Series First, for sale at 5 cents per copy. The public were invited to take them and to hand the price to the ushers at the door.

About one hundred copies were thus placed in the hands of readers, besides hundreds of free copies of the "Hell Tower."

Once more we bade adieu to loving hearts, with mutual good wishes and prayers for Divine blessing, taking the midnight train for San Antonio. Brother Rutherford followed us at Houston, no doubt with good effect.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Our train arrived in good season. We were most cordially received by the local friends and some who had come to meet us from the surrounding country. One brother and his wife came a distance of seventy-five miles by wagon; another a distance of six hundred miles by rail, and so on. Our personal comforts were carefully attended to at the home of Sister Frost. We did not attend the morning service for prayer and testimony, but sought to conserve our strength for the afternoon and evening meetings. Through others we learned that the morning session was one of great profit, many of the dear friends overflowing with praise and gratitude and love to God for his merciful providence in granting to **[R4456 : page 250]** them a knowledge of the Present Truth. We met them in the afternoon and surely their faces and their words of greeting manifested as strongly as could be done the intensity of their love to the Lord and their high appreciation of his merciful provision for us as his people in this Harvest time.

Our afternoon discourse was from the words of our Lord to the disciples who asked him that they might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left hand in his Kingdom, to which request he replied, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" We endeavored to show the value of the glorious offer now being made to the Lord's people of sharing his throne and his glorious work of the Millennium as his members, as his "bride," and joint-heirs of his glory, honor and immortality. Then we pointed out the

meaning of the Lord's expression, "Are ye able to drink of the *cup* that I shall drink of?" We showed that it was the same cup that our Lord drank of, no other that we must share; and that we must drink all of it, and that thus we must "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." We pointed out that this is the same as the Lord meant by the sacramental cup – which we must share if we would share with him in the blessing of all the families of the earth. In other words, this cup of self-denial and self-sacrifice with Jesus signifies *our participation in the blood of the New Covenant* – in providing the wherewithal for the sealing of the New Covenant. We pointed out, however, that the value of the "*cup*" was in our Lord's merit, that it is *his cup*, and that we are merely favored with the privilege of participation with him in his sacrifice, which has all the merit, all the blessing power.

Then we looked at the other feature or condition and saw that it did not refer to water baptism, but to the real baptism in Christ's death. We examined the difference between his death, in which we were to share, and the Adamic death, in which all mankind share. We pointed out that Adamic death was a penalty for sin, but that Christ's death was a sacrifice for sin. We pointed out that by being children of Adam we were sharers in his *penalty, death*, and that we must be justified or freed from that before we could accept a proposition to become *dead with Christ*. We showed that we were freed from our share in Adamic death by faith in the blood of Christ, so that thus being justified we should present our bodies living sacrifices and become *dead with Christ*, for *only "if we suffer with him shall we also reign with him."*

Here we saw the wonderful Divine privilege granted to the Church in this Gospel Age, and to her alone, namely, a share in this "mystery," this hidden thing that the world knoweth not and which only the saints know. The appreciation of this mystery even the saints will lose, unless their hearts are loyal and obedient to the Lord; for obedience is still better than sacrifice in God's sight. At

the conclusion of the service an opportunity was offered for water baptism to those who had already made a consecration to the Lord by a baptism into his death through consecration, and who were striving to carry out that consecration by loyalty to the Lord. Thirteen responded and later were buried in the likeness of his death and raised in the likeness of his resurrection.

We started next morning for Los Angeles, leaving to Brother Rutherford and others the carrying on of the San Antonio Convention another day – praying for the dear friends a rich blessing from the Giver of every good.

More friends joined us here and a third car was added to the equipage, the party in all numbering sixty. How much the dear friends enjoyed the fellowship with each other on this journey may better be imagined than described. They are not all wealthy. Indeed, few of them have more than the necessities of life with merest comfort. Some in one manner and some in another, however, had succeeded in raising the money for this Convention tour in the hope that the fellowship of so many and the refreshment, temporal and spiritual, of the journey itself might compensate them. Wednesday, Wednesday night and Thursday were consumed in the journey from San Antonio to Los Angeles. The ride was a hot and dusty one, though less so than on the occasion of our previous tour. The friends apparently made good use of the time in Christian fellowship, discussing the Word, singing songs of praise, etc., while the Editor and stenographer in the end of one of the cars made ready this report, answered letters and prepared "Watch Tower" matter.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., CONVENTION

Our train was nearly four hours late, so that we missed the afternoon meeting of July 16th. We were in good season, however, for the well-advertised meeting for the public in the evening. The auditorium was crowded, about thirteen hundred being present. We

had excellent attention, our topic being, "Where Are the Dead?" So large an attendance was surprising, because at the same time a remarkable parade was in progress and apparently engrossed the attention of everybody. It should be remembered that the Convention had already been in session for a day with Brother Sullivan one of the principal speakers. The Convention attendance was good, about 300, including some from nearby towns. The meetings of the 17th began at 9 o'clock with a testimony meeting. From 10:30 until 12:15 the Editor held a Question Meeting. The questions were remarkably good and, we trust, satisfactorily answered. A free luncheon was provided for all who remained to it and apparently it was [R4457 : page 250] much enjoyed, not only for the good things upon the table, but also for the fellowship afforded.

At 3 p.m. we addressed another goodly audience of the interested, numbering about three hundred. Excellent attention was given to our remarks, based upon Romans 11:29-32.

We pointed out from our text that the mercy which the Apostle assures us is yet to come to natural Israel under their Covenant – the New (Law) Covenant – is to be not only *God's mercy* and through Christ, but also the Church's mercy – "your mercy." We traced the hopes of Israel and their disappointment in connection with the development of spiritual Israel and showed how, eventually, the New (Law) Covenant will bring them all the blessings and honor originally anticipated. We showed also the high honor conferred upon the Church in becoming the members of the Body of the great Mediator of the New Covenant – sharers with our Redeemer in his great Work of sealing and executing the New Covenant for the blessing of natural Israel, and through them "all the families of the earth."

We called attention to the fact that only by drinking of our Lord's cup and sharing his baptism, his death, could we have

shared with him in his great and glorious work. Opportunity was then offered to any who had made full consecration of their lives to the Lord, "even unto death," to symbolize their consecration by water baptism. Eighteen responded and several subsequently declared they had almost reached the point, but concluded to wait a little longer and still more thoroughly count the cost before taking the step, which they realized to be a great privilege.

Our party numbered about seventy as we left Los Angeles in three tourist cars. While waiting for a start the crowd on the platform and those in the cars sang hymns of praise to the Giver of all good and bade each other Good-bye, again and again. Quite a number had moist eyes as they thought of the pleasure enjoyed during the Convention, and that while we might not meet again on earth we have the glorious prospect of the heavenly reunion in the General Assembly.

THE OAKLAND CONVENTION

We arrived at Oakland just in time for the Sunday afternoon service. About fifty of the dear friends met us at the station. We had most hearty greetings and repeated expressions of Christian love. **[R4457 : page 251]**

The afternoon meeting for the public was held in the First Presbyterian Church. It was crowded, the audience being estimated at eighteen hundred or more. We had most profound attention, our topic being, "Where Are the Dead?" We were told that at least twenty ministers of the city were in attendance. The depth of interest may be gauged by the fact that nearly one thousand were present at the night service, which was very little advertised except by announcement at the afternoon meeting. The evening service was a Question Meeting for the Public, and brought out an interpretation of our Lord's words to the thief on the cross, the rich man and Lazarus, etc., apparently to the satisfaction of the hearers.

On Monday morning we gave a discourse on the privileges of the Harvest Work – Colportage, Volunteering, Sharp-shooting, etc. In the afternoon following the praise service we discoursed on baptism from the text, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." A deep solemnity pervaded the audience and many eyes were moist. At the conclusion of the discourse opportunity was given for a symbolization of baptism and thirty-four responded, all adults, males and females in about equal numbers. At 7:30 p.m., after a few remarks, we had a Love Feast. It was a most inspiring occasion. About six hundred participated. As they filed past and shook hands with us many were the expressions of faithfulness to the Lord for our privileges and the determinations to be faithful and loyal to him to the end of the journey, and to meet with him in the Kingdom to part no more. Many with tears in their eyes asked to be remembered in prayer and said that they had special trials, special difficulties and special besetments in the narrow way. We sought to assure all that the Lord exercises a protecting care of the sheep, and hence that our success lay in our own hands, because he is faithful to do all that he has promised.

An automobile took us rapidly to the station, while the congregation waited to hear Brother Rutherford, whose discourse was to complete the Convention. We remarked that the Convention began the day before our arrival, with a Testimony Meeting, followed with a discourse by Bro. Sullivan. Our party in the special cars left later at midnight. We hastened ahead, so as to give an entire day at Portland and for fear the train might be delayed, because of the heavy traffic towards Seattle.

PORTLAND, OREGON

A journey of two nights and a day brought us to Portland on Wednesday morning, July 21st. At the station we met a goodly number of the friends of the Truth. After breakfast with them we

repaired to the auditorium and soon a most interesting praise and testimony meeting was under way. Our testimonies unitedly were to the goodness of God in all of life's affairs and especially in respect to the Truth – that we had been favored with the knowledge of it. Next came dinner. In the afternoon by request we had a question meeting which lasted for about two hours and developed some very interesting subjects which, we trust, were profitable to us all. After another intermission for refreshments we had an evening service for the public. The house was crowded to its capacity with an audience which gave us the closest attention for two hours, while we discoursed on the "Past, Present and Future of Mankind in the Light of the Bible." Then came our leave-taking and we resumed our journey. The total number in our special cars was now increased to eighty-nine. Nearly all of the Portland friends went to the Seattle Convention, because it afforded opportunities for meeting larger numbers of the friends and for spending several days in spiritual fellowship. They did not join our party because our accommodations were already full. The Portland One-Day Convention will long be remembered by many of us as a season of refreshment.

OUR GREETING

To all aboard the Gospel Train,
And all the friends along the road,
Who gather in convention halls,
Beloved! Greetings in the Lord!
Pen Argyl's little company,
The Bangor brethren, just a few,
Your brothers at Roseto Town,
All join in Christian love to you.

We'd dearly like to go along;
And at this wondrous feast sit down;

But Father knows our means are small,
So, as we go our daily rounds,
Our loving wishes follow you;
Our spirits rise with yours in prayer,
We pray, "God speed the Gospel Train,"
And leave you in our Father's care.

For in His holy Word, we read,
His angels minister to men,
Those who shall heirs of glory be:
Oh, what a shining escort, then,
Attends your way, by day, by night;
Defending you from every foe!
Lie down, and sleep in perfect peace,
While guardian angels come and go.

And as you view God's mighty works,
Think of the perfect earth to come;
When in its robes of living green
It stands, man's everlasting home.
In that blest Restitution time,
Eden shall reach from pole to pole;
While everything with breath, will praise
Our God, while endless ages roll.

There's one Convention, brethren dear,
Which we have set our hearts upon.
No lack of time, or means, or ways,
Shall keep us from that Final One;
When in the *New Jerusalem*,
The First-borns of the Kingdom come,
From north, and south, and east, and west;
And Christ shall bid them "Welcome home."

If we have on the wedding robe,

That wondrous robe of shining white;
If we've embroidered it with care,
In all the colors of the light;
If we've been faithful to our vows,
To sacrifice our little all;
Then, we shall be of those who meet
In Heaven's Grand Convention Hall.

Oh, brethren! let us faithful be!
The time is short; let us press on.
Oh, we would not be left behind,
When all the Sons are gathered home!
We know not how we'll travel yet,
By water, fire, or by air:
We only know, if we're approved,
When that time comes we'll all meet there.

So once again we say, "God speed."
In love, our hearts go out to you;
We pray, "The Father's will be done"
In all you say; in all you do.
As onward, then, you wend your way,
O'er mountain, valley, hill and plain,
May God bless you and all you meet,
While traveling on the Gospel Train.

R. F. D.

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